

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

In its recent e-publication entitled, ICT in Agriculture - Connecting smallholders to knowledge, networks and institutions, Agriculture and Rural Development Department (ARD) of the World Bank has identified two critical factors for using ICTs such as mobile phones and the Internet in agriculture viz., policy change and collective action among extension agents, research institutions, governments and farmers. While policy initiatives can spur the development of the ICT infrastructure for improved information sharing, collective action, facilitated by digital tools can push the agricultural agenda forward.

After a thorough review, the World Bank has listed out the following areas that require attention when using ICT in Agriculture:

**Individuals:** Develop and diversify the skills and competencies of all stakeholders in applying ICTs for innovation.

**Policies:** Generate or adapt institutional and national strategies and policies to make the introduction of ICT innovations more frequent and more effective.

**Institutions :** Adapt organizational structures at all levels to accommodate changes in ICT systems and information management processes.

**Content :** Stimulate open access to the increasing volume of outputs of agricultural research so that all can benefit.

**Processes :** Use ICTs to facilitate and open up inclusive multi-actor processes in which knowledge flows and can be put to use by different stakeholders

**Technologies :** Invest in greater connectivity, data and information generation and handling capacity, hardware, software, and improved human-computer interfaces that have been purposefully designed to enable innovation. Ensure that rural ICT infrastructure and connectivity are enhanced. Specific actions are needed to overcome barriers to technology use, such as culture, language, and gender.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Develop new and improved tools and approaches to assess information and knowledge interventions more effectively.

**Capacities :** Invest in the technical and organizational capacities of individuals and institutions so they appreciate and use ICTs as tools to enhance knowledge creation, transformation, and innovation.

Besides these considerations, one should also bear in mind that not all of the ICTs available for agricultural information systems will work in rural areas. The technical capacity as well as staff capabilities in the line departments, local institutions or research centers working in the rural areas need to be analyzed beforehand, for making the right choices for effective implementation of ICT-enabled knowledge sharing.

This issue of JEE contains eight papers on various topics such as strategies of female-headed households, attitude & adoption of farmers & trainees and the impact of eco-friendly conservation practices. I would like to thank the associate editors and the reviewers for their time and effort to this issue.

**Chief Editor**